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ABSTRACT

This study explored the attitudes of high school teachers of Spanish as a foreign language regarding the following: the use of Spanish, teaching Spanish as a heritage language to Hispanic students, the role of English in the United States, and the use of English at school or home. Participants were teachers of Spanish in three Louisiana school districts. Teachers completed the Attitudes of Teachers of Spanish as a Foreign Language Survey and the Language Attitudes of Teachers Scale. They also participated in group and individual interviews. Findings indicated that Spanish as a heritage language courses should be taught separately from Spanish as a foreign language courses, because of the linguistic and cultural needs of Hispanic students. Participants identified several obstacles to their implementation of heritage language programs. They felt that the barriers they faced could be overcome by a supportive school administration, motivating students to enroll in the courses, training teachers, and acquiring financial resources for materials, curriculum, and assessment (working with guidance counselors for identification and placement). They provided suggestions for accommodating Hispanic students in foreign language courses. Teachers felt this would be possible only if they were prepared to meet students' needs. (Contains 14 references.) (SM)

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Attitudes of Teachers of Spanish as a Foreign Language Towards Teaching Spanish to Hispanic Students

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Attitudes of Teachers of Spanish as a Foreign Language Toward Teaching Spanish To Hispanic Students in Urban Schools

Rossana Ramirez Boyd

ABSTRACT

Many Hispanic students do not have the opportunity to develop their native language. Often, this happens in efforts to adapt to an English-only curriculum and/or due to the lack of access to native language development courses at the schools they attend. This is particularly evident among high school Hispanic students who usually possess oral fluency in Spanish but who lack the writing and reading skills in that language.

The purpose of this research study was to explore the attitudes of teachers and it was guided by four research questions, What are the attitudes of teachers of Spanish as a foreign language toward: 1) the use of Spanish?, 2) teaching Spanish as a heritage language to Hispanic students?, 3) the role of English in the United States?, and 4) the use of English at school or at home?. The research was qualitative and quantitative in design. Quantitative data was gathered from teachers of Spanish of three Louisiana school districts by using the Attitudes of Teachers of Spanish as a Foreign Language Survey and the *Language Attitudes of Teachers Scale*. Qualitative data was gathered by conducting one group and nine individual interviews. Quantitative data was analyzed using percentages, means, and standard deviations and qualitative data was analyzed based on emerging issues to develop an understanding of the problem.

Findings indicated that Spanish as a heritage language courses should be taught separate from Spanish as a foreign language courses because of the linguistic and cultural needs of Hispanic students. Participants identified several obstacles to the implementation of heritage

programs. They also felt that the barriers they face can be overcome by a supportive school administration, motivating students to enroll in the courses, training teachers, and acquiring financial resources for materials, curriculum, and assessment, working with guidance counselors for identification and placement. They provided suggestions for accommodating Hispanic students in foreign language courses. Finally, teachers felt that this would be possible if they are prepared to meet students' needs.

INTRODUCTION

A review of demographic reports on the number of Hispanic students in the United States points to the increasing challenges Spanish teachers face in the education of Hispanic students to foster their self and cultural identity and the development of their heritage language. The U. S. Census of 1990 reported that Spanish was the most common minority language in 39 states and the District of Columbia. Furthermore, the Spanish-speaking population increased from 11.1 million in 1980 to 17.3 million in 1990. The school age segment of this population grew by 1.2 million at a rate of 41.4%. For example, in California, during the 1991-1992 school year, there were approximately 5.1 million children enrolled in public schools; of these, 1.8 million students were Chicanos or Latinos. The challenges are greater with Hispanic students in secondary or post-secondary programs (Macias 1993).

Rennie (1993) believes that all schools must be prepared to meet the challenges of an increasingly diverse population. There are main factors to consider in selecting a program model to meet the educational needs of students:

1) District or school demographics. While some districts or schools have large populations of students from a single language background, others have several groups of students representing different home languages. Others have small numbers of students from as many as 100 different languages enrolled across grade levels.

2) Student characteristics. Some students enter the U. S. with strong academic preparation in their native language while others arrive with little schooling, interrupted schooling, or no school experiences.

3) District or school resources. Districts that have had significant language minority student enrollment may have trained personnel to work with the students while other may be faced with

a sudden influx of students from different language backgrounds and may not have qualified teachers and trained personnel to meet their needs. Therefore, they may not have the resources to provide the types of programs needed to serve them.

The most common language programs for Hispanic students in the United States are English as a second language, bilingual education, foreign language education, and less common, Spanish as a heritage language programs. According to Campbell (1996), students who are candidates for this type of programs demonstrate the following characteristics:

1) Extremely good oral proficiency in their native language

2) Command of nearly 100% of the phonological rules of a standard dialect of the heritage language.

3) Extensive although restricted vocabulary.

4) Minor deviations from morphological, syntactic, and discourse rules of a prestige dialect of the heritage language.

5) Functional literacy in the heritage language, and

6) Knowledge and appreciation of the heritage culture.

Spanish as a heritage language programs aim to develop the existing competencies of students. However, these programs are only common in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas and they are not readily available across the United States. Also, teachers are traditionally prepared to teach Spanish as a foreign language to monolingual English proficient students therefore, the number of qualified teachers to work in heritage language programs is scarce.

Although several language programs are offered to Hispanic students in Louisiana such as bilingual education, foreign languages, and English as a second language, the lack of Spanish as a heritage language programs in the state and the small amount of information available about

what is needed to implement successful Spanish as a heritage language programs for high school Hispanic students raised questions in the mind of the researcher. This was a motivation to explore this problem by examining the opinions, beliefs, and attitudes of teachers and other school personnel to find out what are the barriers and what can be done regarding the implementation of Spanish as a heritage language programs.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To live in a multilingual, multicultural society, to compete successfully in the global marketplace, and to take full advantage of communication technologies, basic education must include competence in second and even third languages. Intercultural understanding and cross-cultural communication are necessary to be effective in diverse local, national and international contexts (Genesse & Cloud 1998).

The growing number of Spanish-speaking people in the U. S. plays a very important role in the preservation and development of the Spanish language and culture (Olivares 1983). In Education, Hispanics still fall behind the rest of the population where 66% do not have a college education. The positive social and political attitudes of our society could play an important role for the advancement of Hispanics in all fields, education in particular (Lamer 1999). However, there are significant barriers to the preservation of heritage languages. These barriers sometimes come from the same language minority population due to: 1) their desire to fully integrate into the target culture, 2) rejections of their heritage culture, 3) ridicule and correction when the heritage language is used by more competent heritage language speakers, 4) reluctance to use the heritage language, and 5) the lack of good heritage language programs (Krashen 1996).

Fernandez and Nielsen (1986) compared heritage language proficiency with school success. They concluded that acquiring proficiency in Spanish has positive effects on academic achievement. In their study of Hispanic high school seniors, they reported that when these students were exposed to Spanish, they performed slightly better in English and had higher educational aspirations that Hispanic students who were only exposed to English in school.

Teachers' opinions and beliefs toward language teaching to language minority students can either assist in advancing the educational needs of these at the high school level or they can

stifle them. For instance, Byrnes and Kiger (1994) investigated the attitudes of 191 regular classroom teachers toward the linguistic diversity of students who were limited English proficient. The results of their study indicated that language attitudes involved structural issues since the attitudes were related to teacher expectations of student performance.

Clair (1993) explored the beliefs, self-reported practices, and professional development needs of three regular classroom teachers with language minority students. Case studies from teachers consisted of interviews, classroom observations, and journal entries. Analysis of the data revealed that teacher beliefs about language minority students may be based on misinformation. The teachers' choice of instructional practices may be based on naïve notions of language proficiency and teachers drew on intuitive wisdom due to their lack of pre-service teacher preparation or inadequate in-service education on issues related to language minority students. Clair recommended that pre-service teacher education programs need to focus on the social, political, and cultural realities of diverse student populations. This focus needs to be expanded to parents and school administrators through dialogues about the diversity of students.

Lucas (1993) found that when secondary schools provide special programs to prepare students for college, these schools offer rigorous content courses and they recognize students for doing well. These schools find the means of supporting and promoting native language use and development through formal classes such as Spanish for Spanish-speakers or the use of bilingual instructional aides, peer tutoring, and the use of cómmunity resources. These acts and attitudes communicate to students that they are valued and respected as well as their language and culture.

Garcia (1991) conducted descriptive research of schools and classrooms where language minority students largely Latino, were successful academically. Data were collected through

interviews with teachers, principals, parents, and classroom observations to assess the dynamics of the instructional process. Analysis of the data indicated that:

1) There was functional communication between teacher and students

2) The instruction of basic skills and academic content was consistently organized around thematic units.

3) Instruction was organized so that students were required to interact with each other using collaborative learning techniques, and

4) Students progressed systematically from writing in the native language to writing in English, making the transition without pressure

5) Teachers were highly committed to the educational success of their students and served as student advocates

6) Principals were highly supportive of their instructional staff while maintaining awareness of the need to conform to district policies on curriculum and academic accountability.

In general, teachers perceived themselves as instructional innovators, continued to be involved in professional development activities, and they had high expectations of all their students. Similarly, Ogbu (1992) recommended that teachers must recognize that language minority students come to school with cultural and language frames of reference. Therefore, they should study their histories and cultural adaptations to understand those frames of references and the students' sense of social identity.

In regards to teaching Spanish to Hispanic students, Valdes (1995) indicated that when these students enroll in Spanish as a foreign language courses, teachers find themselves unprepared to meet their students' linguistic needs and to recognize their cultural backgrounds.

Many teachers of Spanish believe that the focus of teaching this language to English-speaking students should be speaking, understanding, reading, and writing but if there is a student who already communicates in the target language there is nothing left to teach.

Valdes found that writing skills in Spanish are almost non-existent in many U. S. Hispanic communities. Therefore, she recommends that teachers of Spanish could use the speaking skills of Hispanic students to teach them writing skills within their foreign language courses. But, this is usually a challenge because Hispanic students come with different levels of exposure to their heritage language and culture. Also, they are from different nationalities each of which represent cultural and linguistic varieties. Therefore, she also recommends that separate courses should be offered for Hispanic students. These courses would use appropriate curricula and materials, appropriate instructional strategies, and appropriate teacher education programs.

The success of Spanish as a heritage language programs would not only depend on having the appropriate tools and personnel but on the socio-political attitudes of communities, teachers, administrators, government officials and others towards developing the Spanish of Hispanic students. Therefore, through this study, a better understanding of the problem was investigated by exploring the attitudes of teachers and other school personnel toward teaching Spanish to Hispanic students.

METHODOLOGY

Teachers of Spanish as a foreign language from three Louisiana School districts were chosen for this study because they have the largest concentration of Hispanic. In addition, three schools within one of the school districts were chosen because they are the most impacted by Hispanic students in Louisiana. The research methodology was quantitative and qualitative in design. Four research questions guided this study:: What are the attitudes of teachers of Spanish as a foreign language toward: 1) the use of Spanish?, 2) teaching Spanish as a heritage language to Hispanic students?, 3) the role of English in the United States?, and 4) the use of English at school and at home in the United States?.

Instrumentation

To find answers to the first two questions: 1) What are the attitudes of teachers of Spanish as a foreign language toward the use of Spanish, and 2) What are the attitudes of teachers of Spanish as a foreign language toward teaching Spanish as a heritage language to Hispanic students?, the researcher developed and piloted The Attitudes of Teachers as a Foreign Language Survey. This survey consists of 20 statements, 5 of which asked demographic information and 15 were Likert-type statements that include four levels of agreement, agree, strongly agree, disagree, and strongly disagree on attitudes toward the Spanish language in Louisiana and teacher attitudes toward the implementation of Spanish as a heritage language.

To answer research questions, 3) What are the attitudes of teachers of Spanish as a foreign language toward the role of English in the United States?, and 4) What are the attitudes of teachers of Spanish as a foreign language toward the use of English at school and at home in the United States?, the *Language Attitudes of Teachers Scale* (Byrnes and Kiger 1994) was used. This scale was located while performing the review of the literature by the researcher. It consists

of 13 Likert-type statements that include five levels of agreement: agree, strongly agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. These statements are categorized in two parts that ask: teachers attitudes toward the role of the English language in the United States and teachers attitudes toward the use of English at home and at school by linguistic minority populations.

From the results of the survey and the scale, a questionnaire totaling 10 questions was developed by the researcher to conduct a group semi-structured interview of 6 teachers to gain additional understanding of the problem. The results of the group interview were used to develop questions for 9 semi-structured interviews of 4 questions each for 3 teachers, 3 principals, and 3 guidance counselors of three high schools impacted by Hispanic student populations.

Quantitative Data Collection

All high school teachers of Spanish as a foreign language (68) were invited to participate in the completion of both the survey and the scale. During a period of 4 months, both of these instruments were mailed to the participants and they were asked to return them to the researcher without their names in order to maintain their anonymity and confidentiality. Two follow-up mailings were conducted and a return rate of 70% was achieved (48 teachers).

Quantitative Data Analysis

The items in the 48 surveys and scales received were assigned values in order to analyze the responses. The frequency of the responses and their corresponding values were entered in a spreadsheet, then percentages, means, and standard deviation calculations were performed for each item total as the analysis of the data. The Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha formula was applied to ensure the internal consistency and reliability of each item.

Qualitative Data Collection

The data analysis indicated that there was disagreement among teachers on several statements in the survey and the scale. In order to gather additional information to understand the problem, the 10 semi-structured questions were used during a group interview of 6 teachers from four high schools and two school districts. Participants signed a release form to grant permission to the researcher to tape-record their information.

Issues that emerged more than five times during the group interview were the basis for the researcher to develop questions to conduct the 9 individual interviews with 3 teachers, 3 guidance counselors, and 3 principals of three schools impacted by Hispanic student populations were also tape-recorded by the researcher.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The researcher transcribed the tape-recorded interviews word by word. Issues that were addressed by the participants at least five times were coded by topic. Coded information from participants was reported to provide additional information to understand the research problem. Critical implications for the development and the implementation of heritage language programs for high school Hispanic students emerged.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following are the results of the survey, the group interview, and the individual interviews. Each will be presented by making connections to the main research question about the attitudes of teachers of Spanish toward teaching Spanish to Hispanic students.

Attitudes of Teachers of Spanish as a Heritage Language Survey

Results from the survey are summarized in Tables 1, 2, and 3. Item 5 in table 1 suggests that most teachers agreed or strongly agreed that Spanish should be taught to most students in Louisiana. More than half of teachers (52%) agreed that Spanish plays and important role in the state, and local communities need to preserve the Spanish language.

Table 1
Attitudes toward the Spanish Language in Louisiana

Items n = 48	% SA= 4	% A = 3	% D = 2	% SD = 1	M	S. D.
5. Spanish should be taught to most students in this state	43.7	45.8	8.3	2	3.3	0.71
6. Spanish plays an important role in this state	52	41.6	2	2	3.3	0.87
7. Local communities need to preserve the Spanish language	52	39.5	6	0	3.4	0.78
8. Spanish is a language worth learning	75	25	0	0	3.7	0.43

Source: Boyd, Part II, Table 4.2, p. 92

Table 1 also indicates that an overwhelming 75% of teachers strongly agreed that Spanish is a language worth learning. These results might e due to the geographical proximity of the U. S. and Latin America, the numbers of immigrants from Spanish-speaking backgrounds who live

in the U. S., the broader opportunities that the Spanish language provides in the work place, for cross-cultural communications, or travel.

Table 2
Teacher Attitudes toward the Implementation of Spanish as a Heritage Language

Items n = 48	% SA= 4	% A = 3	% D = 2	% SD= 1	M	S. D.
9. Teaching Spanish to Hispanic students contributes to their academic achievement	58	31	10	0	3.4	0.68
10. Hispanic students should enroll in English classes as well as in Spanish as a foreign language courses	65	31	2	2	3.5	0.64
11. Teaching Spanish to Hispanic students will enhance their language skills	69	27	2	0	3.6	0.73
12. Teaching Spanish to Hispanic students will preserve their family heritage	58	37.5	4	0	3.5	0.58
13. Spanish teachers are prepared pedagogically to teach Spanish as a heritage language to Hispanic students	16.6	27	48	8	2.5	0.86
14. Spanish teachers recognize the dialectical varieties of the Spanish language	25	41.6	27	6	2.8	0.87

Source: Boyd, Part III, Table 4.3, p. 94

Table 2 above summarizes the results of items 9 to 14. Most teachers seem to be in agreement with the statements in items 9 to 12 and 14. For example, 91% of teachers agree or strongly agree that teaching Spanish to Hispanic students contributes to their academic achievement. In item 10, 98% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that Hispanic students should enroll in English classes as well as in Spanish as a foreign language courses. But in item 13 almost half of the participants (55%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that Spanish teachers are prepared pedagogically to teach Spanish as a heritage language to Hispanic students. These results might be due to teachers recognizing that teaching Spanish as a heritage language is different than teaching Spanish as a foreign language.

The 45% of teachers who agreed with the statement probably have Spanish proficiency at the superior or native-like level and they might have more experience with the culture and language of Hispanics.

Table 3
Teacher Attitudes toward the Implementation of Spanish as a Heritage Language

Items n = 48	% SA= 4	% A = 3	% D = 2	% SD= 1	M	S. D.
15. Most Spanish teachers would be willing to teach Spanish as a heritage language in this area	27	46	25	2	2.8	0.87
16. The Spanish high school curriculum in this area could be designed to teach Spanish as a heritage language	31	52	10.4	4	3	0.87
17. Spanish as a heritage language should be taught separately from Spanish as a foreign language	43.7	31	21	4	3.1	0.88
18. Spanish teachers would feel self-conscious about their Spanish proficiency level if they had Hispanic students in their classes	16.6	35.4	29	18.7	2.5	0.98
19. The Spanish of Hispanic students is usually better than that of Spanish teachers	2	29	448	20	2.1	0.75
20. Universities should include methodologies for Hispanic students in their Spanish teacher preparation courses	52	37.5	8	7	3.3	0.81

Source: Boyd, Part III, Table 4.3, p. 94

Table 3 above summarizes the result of items 15 to 20. Item 15 indicates that 72% of teachers agree that . Most Spanish teachers would be willing to teach Spanish as a heritage

language. Item 16 indicates that 83% of teachers agree that the foreign language high school curriculum could be designed to teach Spanish as a heritage language. For item 17, 74% of teachers felt that Spanish as a heritage language should be taught separately from Spanish as a foreign language. These results seem to convey that although teachers do not feel prepared to teach heritage language courses, they seem to feel that the existing foreign language curriculum can be adapted to teach Spanish as a heritage language. In the results for item 20 an overwhelming 91% of teachers are in agreement that universities should include methodologies for Hispanic students in their Spanish teacher preparation courses.

Group Interview

Qualitative results were obtained from a group interview of six volunteer teachers. The questions they were asked were the result of survey and scale data analysis. The results that are presented here focus on the research question, What are the attitudes of Teachers of Spanish toward teaching Spanish to Hispanic students?. These results provided additional information about the views of teachers about the problem.

For example, one of the questions that the researcher asked to teachers was: "Based on survey results, 72% of you agreed that you are willing to teach Spanish as a heritage language yet 74% of you feel that Spanish as a heritage language should be taught separate from Spanish as a foreign language. Why did you feel they should be taught separately?."

Pamela, one of the participants offered her opinion by saying that, "Teaching Spanish to Spanish speaking kids and teaching Spanish to English speaking kids is two different things." This is because if a Spanish speaking student is not interested in learning more about his own language, he will not learn much more. Teaching Spanish as a foreign language to students who speak only English and who are just learning a new language might be productive but for those

who already speak Spanish there needs to be two types of instruction. Also, she felt that it is not appropriate to mix native speakers and non-native speakers in a class for the purpose of learning Spanish.

In addition to the need to separate students and to have a separate type of instruction for heritage language programs, Juana, another participant, mentioned some of the challenges she has faced for six years in her desire to implement a heritage language program at her school. However, some of her challenges are beyond what she can do. One of them is the identification and placement of Hispanic students in foreign language programs. She explains the situation as follows:

> It is a nightmare for two reasons, I have a class where I am teaching basic Spanish, teaching them to speak the language, basic grammar, writing, readings, and I have students who most often than not have just come from Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and they come fresh from their schools in those countries so they know how to read and write and speak, what are they doing in my class?. If I have a class that's over 35 or 38, I give them a workbook to work (with) but they get bored.

Juana felt that when teaching her main concern was with the 90% of non-Hispanic students who usually comprise her class. Therefore, she pays little attention to the few Hispanic students in her class who sit on the side of the class completing other tasks. She recommended that Hispanic students who can read and write Spanish would benefit from enrolling in Spanish levels III and IV not in Spanish I and II. But most of the time guidance counselors make the placement and scheduling decisions,

> See, they (students) have rights too and they have the right to be educated in what they need, we don't give them what they need. The counselors don't listen, what they can do is simply to be a little more concerned in giving these students what they need. Why should they put them in Spanish I and II because they know that (Spanish) already?. Specially when you have Spanish III and IV. If we have Spanish III and IV now, it's because I have been fighting all along.

Analysis of the data indicated that there are reasons for teaching Hispanic students separate from non-Spanish natives. Some of those reasons are the level of literacy that Hispanic students bring to the Spanish classroom. Very often, newly arrived students are proficient in their native language. Guidance counselors do not seem to recognize this therefore, these students are placed in Spanish I and II classes instead of in Spanish III and IV levels. Additionally, teachers interviewed described additional reasons to offer the programs separately:

1) Spanish-speaking Hispanic students possess basic oral proficiency in their native language while native English speakers are just beginning to acquire Spanish when they enroll in the level I course.

2) Hispanic students with literacy skills in Spanish need to continue to improve those skills. Students who do not possess those skills need to acquire them.

3) Hispanic students with different degrees of literacy skills need specific classroom objectives, materials, and methods of instruction accordingly.

4) Hispanic students would be more receptive if they had native Spanish-speaking teachers in a heritage language course because they tend to distrust the knowledge of the Spanish language and culture of non-Hispanic teachers.

5) Guidance counselors need to understand that although most Hispanic students speak Spanish, not all are have the same Spanish proficiency level, particularly in reading and writing.

Another question that was asked to teachers during the group interview was: "Results from the survey indicated that 56% of teachers felt that the Spanish as a foreign language curriculum could be designed to teach Spanish as a heritage language to Hispanic students. How can this be done?, What changes or additions do you suggest for the present curriculum?."

Stacey and Ramona felt that changes to the present curriculum are not easy to accomplish because of the many levels of Spanish that Hispanic students bring with them. They described two types of these students:

1) U. S. born Hispanics whose formal schooling has been in the U. S. and their dominant language is English. Spanish is used at home and in their community. Although they have oral fluency, their literacy skills are almost non-existent.

2) Recent immigrant Hispanic students more likely have received formal schooling in their countries of origin and they literate in Spanish. They possess high levels of cognitive knowledge in core subject areas except in English therefore, they become ESL students. Ramona described these two types of students as follows:

> When it comes to writing and grammar skills, they are zero (Type 1), they are at the kindergarten level, reading absolutely none. Telling them find the verb or what have you, they have no clue of grammar skills. Then you have others (Type 2) who come to high school with all their education, skilled, and knowledgeable in the content of their language.

Teachers felt that if the needs of both students are to be met, schools would have to form separate courses and this creates a new problem of not having enough Hispanic students to form a class. Additionally, foreign and heritage language courses are electives and not all students might be interested in enrolling and most students can graduate from high school without a language requirement except English.

Ramona explained that if she would teach Spanish as a heritage language to Type 1 students, she would:

1) Teach what English native speakers learn in an English I course but the content will be in Spanish and the literature will be related to Spanish and Latin American authors.

2) Teach written composition, documented essays, literature, writers, history, and grammar.

Ramona also explained that if she would teach Spanish as a heritage language to Type 2 students, she focus on refining and fine tuning their literacy skills and to focus on the studying of literature from well known Hispanic authors.

The researcher also asked the teachers, "What aspects should be the focus of pre-service and in-service training so that teachers can become prepared to teach Spanish as a heritage language to Hispanic students?." Some teachers suggested that it should be Spanish literature because that is not usually covered in foreign language teacher certification programs. Stacey described the ideal Spanish as a heritage language teacher as someone who is a native speaker, who possesses a strong literature background, and who has a broad cultural background to help refine the language skills of literate Hispanic students. Juana felt that the ideal teacher should have a master's degree in Spanish literature

Analysis of findings suggested that not all Spanish as a foreign language teachers are prepared to teach heritage language courses to literate Hispanic students because higher level Spanish literature courses are not part of teacher preparation programs. In addition, the curriculum for Type 1 and Type 2 Hispanic students should be different. For Type 1 students grammar, written composition, essays, and literature are suggested. For Type 2 students, literature and refinement of literacy skills should be the focus. Valdes (1995) pointed out that most teachers of Spanish are trained to teach standard Spanish with an emphasis on oral communication skills. This is under the assumption that their students will be English native speakers. Also, 89% of teachers who completed the survey felt that universities should include methodologies for teaching Spanish as a heritage language.

Individual Interviews

Nine interviews were conducted at three high schools. At each high school, one Spanish teacher of Spanish, one guidance counselor and one principal participated in the interviews. The questions asked during the interview were based on common concerns that emerged during the group interview such as guidance counselors, scheduling, types of students, teacher preparation, and appropriate curricula. The interviews provided a deeper understanding about the attitudes of teaching Spanish to Hispanic students.

Although high school #1 had 600 Hispanic students (1/3 of the total) in the spring of 1999 the interviewed guidance counselor felt that it would be difficult to implement Spanish as a heritage language courses because of scheduling concerns, lack of Spanish III and IV course offerings, preference of Hispanic students to take other elective courses such as AP Calculus, AP Biology or AP English, and literate Hispanic students taking and passing a Spanish proficiency test administered by the school district. She referred to the literate type of Hispanic students who are usually recent arrivals and who rather enroll in ESL and all other courses required for graduation.

Similarly, high school #2 did not offer Spanish as a heritage language courses. However, the guidance counselor at this school said that Spanish levels III, IV, and advanced placement are offered. He referred to literate Hispanic students to day that they are usually placed in ESL classes and only if the ESL teacher recommends it, these students can enroll in higher level Spanish courses. To this effect he said:

> The ESL teacher is fluent in Spanish and she works together with other Spanish teachers to provide needed services to Hispanic students and the school administration honors those teachers' referrals.

In relation to non-literate Hispanic students he said that the general assumption is that if these students are fluent in Spanish they are also proficient in reading and writing it. But he found that is not the case. Therefore they place them in Spanish levels I and II so they can preserve their language. "We make sure that they hold on to their language if they are interested in doing that and develop their skills as best they can." The attitude of this counselor was very positive toward teaching Spanish to Hispanic students during the interview. But he scheduled English speaking students and Hispanic students (non-literate) in Spanish I and II classes where these students are the minority and their literacy needs seem to continue unmet.

The guidance counselor at high school #3 indicated that it is difficult to teach Spanish to Hispanic students because the literate type of students take placement tests of Spanish levels I and II which leaves them little motivation to enroll in higher level courses. She tries to schedule non-literate Hispanic students in Spanish level II if they are committed to taking Spanish III to fulfill the two year foreign language requirement at her school. She felt that offering a separate Spanish course designed for this group of students would be a good idea because:

> Teachers of Spanish at this school teach a lot of grammar from a point of reference that you would know it in English and that is very difficult for a Spanish child.

It seemed like Spanish teachers at this school came in contact more with non-literate Hispanic students who are generally U. S. born and who receive their schooling in English. However, their grammatical skills in English were not strong enough therefore seemed to have difficulty learning the Spanish grammar.

At high school #1, the teacher of Spanish as a foreign language had the experience that Hispanic students accepted placement in Spanish level I courses under the assumption that it would be an easy class. Their motivation to continue in the course was lost when they were

embarrassed for not being able to read and write their home language. She pressed the school administration to offer a Spanish as a heritage language course for these students and she succeeded because of their support.

But guidance counselors scheduled all Spanish proficiency level Hispanic students into one class. Having the literate and non-literate Hispanic students together aggravated the problem she was trying to solve. The language gaps of both groups were too great and separating the literate from the non-literate into different courses would not allow the number of students to make up a full class. Finally, this teacher recommended that teachers need to be flexible and she suggested that they try to use the strengths of Hispanic students who enroll in their classes. Also, they can use curriculum options available in the market to accommodate Hispanic students.

Findings from Garcia (1991) in the literature review support the findings of this study about the importance of teachers being highly committed to the educational success of their students and a supportive school administration that believes students will be successful.

The teacher at high school #2 felt that non-literate Hispanic students can do well in Spanish I and II courses because in her classes:

> They are finding things that they didn't know before, even though they speak it they are finally learning what the grammar means and why the structures are the way they are which is a big help to them.

This teacher felt that teaching Spanish to students through heritage language courses would be an inconvenience because an assessment, placement decisions, materials, and a curriculum would be needed before hand. It is important to note that this teacher identified a third group among Hispanic students, the semi-literate. These students, she explained, were born in the U. S. and received formal schooling in English, then they go back to their parents' native country and they receive schooling in Spanish. In relation to this she explained:

In some cases the student went back to the parents' native country and came back, you see?. Like I have a little girl, her family is from Honduras and she said she's bee here for quite a while and now she speaks English quite well and when she goes to Honduras she says she is embarrassed to communicate with her cousins but she says she is afraid because she doesn't know if she is saying it right. You know…it's like a catch 22 for some of them.

The teacher at high school #3 had experiences teaching Spanish to the three types of Hispanics. She suggested a heritage language course of study for non-literate and semi-literate students, "Should center around reading and writing to include activities such as how to write a paragraph, how to write stories, and how to answer questions." During the group interview some of the teachers suggested including literature. For literate Hispanic students, this teacher felt that instruction should center around syllable separation, , use of accent marks, word classification, essays, compositions, the use of printed media, literature, and research projects. In the group interview, teachers also suggested the teaching of history.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

As stated in the abstract and in the methodology section of this paper, four research questions guided the study. The two questions that relate to the attitudes of teachers toward the use of Spanish and to the teaching of Spanish to Hispanic students has been the focus for this paper. Following are the findings recommendations, and conclusions for each of the two questions in mention:

Findings

What are the attitudes of teachers of Spanish as a foreign language toward the use of Spanish?

Results from the survey indicated that 89.5% of teachers agreed that Spanish should be taught to most students in the state of Louisiana. Of teachers, 93.6% agreed that the Spanish language plays an important role in this state. Also, 91.5% of teachers agreed that local communities need to preserve the Spanish language and 75% of teachers felt that the Spanish language is worth learning. Findings from the group interview and the review of the literature indicated that Spanish is the second most commonly spoken language in the United States. The individual interview results suggested that teachers were aware of the varieties of the Spanish language and teachers were aware of the importance of Spanish to increase students' academic achievement.

Conclusions

Most teachers of Spanish tended to have positive attitudes toward the Spanish language. For example, they felt that Spanish plays an important role in the state, that Spanish is worth learning, that it should be preserved in local communities, and that Spanish should be taught to most students in the state.

Although, Louisiana high schools enrolled 38,637 students in Spanish as a foreign language courses during the 1996-1997 school year, few Hispanic students were enrolled in those courses. Based on the results, this is due in part to Hispanic students taking other courses required for graduation.

Recommendations

1) Spanish teachers should address the linguistic needs of literate, non-literate, and semi-literate Hispanic students in their classes through the use of a variety of reading and writing activities and through the use of optional materials that would develop the Spanish of their Hispanic students.

2) Teachers should become more aware of their Hispanic student's cultural and linguistic backgrounds including Spanish language varieties, and

3) Teachers should receive training on how to accommodate the needs of Hispanic students in their classes.

Findings

What are the attitudes of teachers of Spanish as a foreign language toward teaching Spanish to Hispanic students?

Most teachers (91.6%) tended to agree that teaching Spanish to Hispanic students contributes to their academic achievement. This is supported by Garcia (1991) who found that language minority students in academically successful schools progressed systematically from writing in their native language to writing in English, making this a gradual transition. Findings from the interviews also supported that teaching Spanish to Hispanic students assists in their academic achievement. In the survey, the majority of teachers (97%) tended to indicate positive attitudes toward Hispanic students enrolling in Spanish as a foreign language classes because it

would enhance their language skills (96%). Teachers agreed (46%) or strongly agreed (27%) that they would be willing to teach Spanish as a heritage language to Hispanic students.

Teachers tended to have positive attitudes toward teaching Spanish to Hispanic students and they were willing to teach as a heritage language courses. Also, 65% of teachers agreed that those courses should be taught separately from Spanish as a foreign language. Results from interviews indicated the attitudes of these teachers might be due to the varying levels of Spanish language proficiency that Hispanic students bring to the classroom. They classified these students in three groups, the Spanish non-literate, the literate, and the semi-literate. In addition, teachers, guidance counselors, and principals interviewed identified other considerations for teaching Spanish to Hispanic students. They felt those considerations are also barriers for the implementation of heritage language programs at their schools such as the:

1) Lack of an appropriate curriculum

2) Lack of an appropriate assessment instrument

3) Lack of knowledge of students' literacy levels for placement

4) Lack of scheduling options

5) Lack of financial resources (for materials and personnel)

6) Lack of support from the school administration

7) Lack of adequate numbers of Hispanic students to form full classes

8) Lack of qualified teachers

9) Lack of positive attitudes of Hispanic students in Spanish as foreign language classes

10) Spanish is an elective course

Without the appropriate resources and a mechanism in place to teach Spanish as a heritage language to Hispanic students, the participants felt that accommodating Hispanic

students in foreign language courses might be the most feasible solution. Spanish non-literate and semi-literate students can be placed in Spanish II and literate students can be placed in Spanish III, IV, or Advanced Placement, if available. All of this provided that teachers focus their instruction in developing the language skills of their students.

Conclusions

Attitudes of teachers, principals, and guidance counselors toward teaching Spanish to Hispanic students were positive but they described the considerations listed in the findings section above as barriers to the implementation of Spanish as a heritage language courses.

Recommendations

School administrators and teachers need to develop the interest for the implementation of heritage language courses. This interest will motivate them to find the financial resources to offer the courses. With the interest in place, the following can be done:

1) Seek financial resources from grants, foundations, or the foreign language allotment

2) Create a center school were the courses could be offered particularly to non-literate and semi-literate Hispanic students from several schools. This way there would be enough students to form a class for each group.

3) Use one of the current Spanish-native teachers to teach the two courses at the center schools. This could be two hours per day.

4) Students who cannot attend the center school could attend Spanish as a foreign language classes where teachers can accommodate the linguistic needs of the students.

5) To accommodate students, instruction can center around writing compositions and essays, Spanish language mechanics, grammar, reading, literature, history, and culture.

6) A screening criteria is needed for guidance counselors to identify non-literate, semi-literate, and literate Hispanic students for appropriate placement decisions.

This research study has made a major contribution to the body of knowledge in the teaching of Spanish as a heritage language. Ins spite of the barriers, it is possible to implement the courses even in schools of states with smaller Hispanic student populations.

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